

On April 30th, Congressman Blumenauer met with Hispanic leaders from a variety of Oregon organizations to discuss issues that impact underrepresented communities. The event was held at Teatro Milagro (Miracle Theater), Portland's leading Hispanic cultural arts center, on the Monday morning before their next production is set to open, *Oedipus del Rey*.

Over coffee and pan dulce (sweet breakfast breads), the participants provided Blumenauer with wide-ranging perspectives on the most pressing issues facing Hispanics in Portland, Oregon and around the country. The importance of using education, sustainability and inherent community strengths as positive anti-poverty strategies was a consensus among all attendees. Other issues included jobs, workforce investment, sustainability and diversity in both local communities and the workplace, as well as specific legislation including the DREAM Act, STAPLE Act, StartUp Visa Act – all of which the Congressman supports enthusiastically. Congressional proposals to increase student loan interest rates and end the Child Tax Credit for certain taxpayers (targeting a group of taxpayers that is 80% Hispanic) were discussed; Blumenauer voiced his support for fighting back against them both.

"It's past time to deal with the millions of people who are already here and part of the fabric of our communities," Blumenauer said. "Often, they are families that include children who are citizens and our current policies inflict damage to these family ties, especially to the children, and not to mention that some of our current policies deny smart people who are educated at great expense – at some of the finest institutions in America – the ability to remain at work here. They end up being hired by foreign overseas competitors or American companies have to create jobs overseas. Ultimately what will help us unwind these problems, save money and heartache, and get about the business of building a stronger American future for all of our families is to address things holistically, which so many of you and your organizations are doing today."

Participants at the event included representatives from Hacienda Community Development Corporation (HCDC), Verde (a non-profit organization that works to train Latinos primarily in green jobs), Catholic Charities of Oregon, the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Oregon ACLU and Oregon Hispanic Bar Association, the Center for Diversity and the Environment, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, PCUN (Pineros y Campesinos del Noroeste) and community organizers from Multnomah and Washington counties.

